

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY13 Nancy Foster Scholarship Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NMS-2013-2003503

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates: Completed applications must be received by Grants.gov or the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries by December 6, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

PLEASE NOTE: All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov can be extremely heavy resulting in further delays. If Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit their application in paper format prior to the due date outlined in this Full Funding Opportunity. Applicants submitting a paper application should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application is received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program provides support for independent graduate-level studies in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, social science and resource management of ocean and coastal areas), particularly to women and minorities. Individuals who are U.S. citizens and are applying to or have been accepted to a graduate program at a U.S. accredited institution may apply. Prospective scholars do not need to be enrolled in a graduate program at the time of application, but must be admitted to a graduate level program in order to be awarded this scholarship. Scholarship selections are based on academic excellence, letters of recommendations, research and career goals, and financial need. Applicants must have and maintain a minimum cumulative and term grade point average of 3.5 and maintain full-time student status for every term, and for the duration of their award. Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships may provide, subject to appropriations, yearly support of up to \$42,000 per student (a 12-month stipend of \$30,000 in addition to an education allowance of up to \$12,000), and up to \$10,000 of support for a four to six week program collaboration at a NOAA facility. Completion of one (1) program collaboration is required for every Doctoral scholarship award, with a second

recommended, but not required. For Master's degree level scholars, completion of program collaboration is strongly recommended, but is not required. A maximum of \$94,000 may be provided to Master degree students (up to 2 years of support and one program collaboration opportunity) and up to \$188,000 may be provided to Doctoral students (up to 4 years of support and two program collaboration opportunities).

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program recipients will be required to participate in a NOAA Orientation Training to meet with Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) staff at a date and location to be determined during the month of either July or August, 2013. If scholarships have not been awarded before this mandatory training, recipients may be required to incur pre-award costs that will be reimbursed after award funds have been issued.

The program collaboration opportunity is designed to allow scholars to participate in research activities for four to six weeks at a field office of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, or other NOAA program offices.

Federal support for the program collaboration may be used toward allowable costs such as: travel to and from the NOAA facility, housing, per diem, laboratory costs, research vessel support, and consumables while conducting research at the NOAA facility. Scholars are required to provide their own health insurance coverage during the program collaboration.

Master's degree level scholars must identify their program collaboration in the first year, and Doctoral scholars must identify their program collaboration within the first two years. Approval from NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is required prior to embarking on the program collaboration.

Additional information about the scholarship can be obtained in the full announcement text of the Federal Funding Opportunity.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is authorized at 16 U.S.C. 1445c-1 and 16 U.S.C. 1445c to recognize outstanding achievement in oceanography, marine biology or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas) particularly by women and members of minority groups. The scholarship supports independent graduate level research through financial support of graduate studies in such fields. Gender and minority status are not considered when selecting award recipients. However, special outreach efforts are employed to solicit applications from women and minorities. Scholarships are distributed by disciplines, institutions, and geography, and by degree sought, with selections within distributions based on financial need, the potential for success in a graduate level studies program (academic achievement), and the potential for achieving research and career goals. The program is administered through NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and is funded annually with 1% of the amount appropriated each fiscal year to carry out the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is seeking applications for the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program from individuals, particularly women and minorities, who, due to financial constraints, may otherwise not be able to pursue an advanced degree in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, social science, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas). The program seeks to increase the number of women and minorities in these scientific disciplines, particularly as they relate to the mission of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS).

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries conducts, sponsors, and facilitates research to better understand ecosystems and cultural resources in marine sanctuaries, their changing condition, and the significance of threats. ONMS uses conservation science to support policy decisions, develop effective response capabilities, evaluate management practices, and support broader, NOAA-wide responsibilities for marine conservation and management. Science priorities are identified within national sanctuary management plans and are necessary to protect and conserve sanctuary resources, manage risks, reduce threats, and respond to unexpected events. Strong partnerships, expert scientific content and judgment, and peer review enhance the accuracy and credibility of monitoring and research. In addition, science, education, outreach, and policy development work together to raise awareness and prompt effective action that will address ocean problems. More information on the ONMS can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>.

NOAA recognizes the student's need to ensure that scholarly research, which is often hypothesis based, addresses critical gaps in knowledge about ecological processes, physiological mechanisms, evolutionary underpinnings, human behaviors, preferences and values, and related areas. The nature of ONMS research, as well as interactions with ONMS staff and partners with similar goals, can help students fulfill their degree requirements through work benefiting not only national marine sanctuaries, but marine conservation more broadly, and ecosystem science as a whole. In addition to natural resource studies, scholars may investigate socioeconomic, maritime archaeological and cultural resource studies in national marine sanctuaries.

General science priorities for ONMS are stated below. Site specific needs are identified in the ONMS Science Needs Assessment available at:

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment>. Contact information for Conservation Science Program staff is available at the Science Needs Assessment website.

Integrated approaches to assess and monitor the condition and trends of natural and cultural resources using ecological, archaeological and socioeconomic indicators. Results support development of sanctuary conditions reports (<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/condition/>) and help sanctuary management evaluate the condition of sanctuary resources.

Characterization of habitats, communities, and ecological processes within sanctuaries. Many sanctuaries need to establish baseline knowledge of protected resources such as deep sea communities, estuarine habitat, or coral reefs to be able to implement effective management actions.

Climate change research and monitoring as it relates to sanctuary resources (e.g., ocean acidification, temperature change, sea level change, species range shifts and phenology, and changes in physical processes).

Evaluate the socioeconomic and ecological effects of marine zoning such as no-take reserves, recreational fishing areas, research areas, and zones designated for specific uses such as shipping lanes. The findings will support decisions about locating and sizing zones, and modifying existing zones to better protect and restore ecosystems.

Conduct research on protected species such as seabirds and marine mammals to inform policy and support protection and recovery efforts.

Assessments of how human activities such as fishing, land use runoff, and marine debris affect sanctuary qualities such as biodiversity, biomass, water quality, and health of sanctuary ecosystems.

Conduct historical ecology studies to evaluate changes over the past centuries, including social dynamics that drove changes.

Document and assess sanctuary submerged archaeological resources and assess their national significance according to criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.

Conduct comprehensive surveys for historic shipwreck sites, particularly those in deeper waters, where sites may have better chances for good preservation in sanctuaries.

Conduct studies to assess the probability for Paleolithic human habitation remains within submerged sanctuary bottomlands. Findings would be used to develop initiatives to use remote sensing to identify relict landforms and to use modeling to predict possible sites of prehistoric human habitation.

Conduct studies on the economic value of ecosystem services of natural and/or cultural resources. This could include use and non-use values.

Conduct studies on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of sanctuary management strategies and regulations for different stakeholders/user groups.

Conduct research related to Native and Indigenous perception of cultural landscapes of sanctuaries and other protected areas located within their traditional coastal lands and waters, and how these differing cultural perceptions can be effectively integrated into place-based management of protected areas.

C. Program Authority

16 USC 1445c-1 and 16 USC 1445c.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Subject to appropriations, approximately \$500,000 will be available for FY 2013. The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program anticipates that approximately 2-4 scholarships will be awarded. The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program provides yearly support of up to \$42,000 per student (a 12-month stipend of \$30,000 in addition to a tuition allowance of up to \$12,000) and up to \$10,000 support for a four to six week program collaboration at a field office of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries or other NOAA facility. Completion of one (1) program collaboration is required for every PhD Scholarship Award, with a second recommended, but not required. For Master's degree level scholars, completion of a program collaboration is strongly recommended, but is not required. A maximum of \$94,000 may be

provided to Master's degree level students (up to two years of support and one program collaboration opportunity) and up to \$188,000 may be provided to Doctoral level students (up to four years of support and up to two program collaboration opportunities). Travel support (logistics and funding, not to exceed \$2,000) will also be provided to Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program recipients to attend a NOAA orientation in a to-be-determined location, where Foster Scholars will also meet with Office of National Marine Sanctuaries leadership and staff.

B. Project/Award Period

The award periods are up to two years for a student in a Master's level program and up to four years for a Doctoral level candidate. The anticipated start date is July 1, 2013. If an applicant is selected for initial funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. .

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument is a Federal grant to the individual applicant.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Only individuals who are U.S. citizens and are applying to or have been accepted to a U.S. accredited graduate institution to pursue a Master's or Doctoral level degree in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, (including all science, engineering, social science and resource management of ocean and coastal areas) are eligible for an award under this scholarship program. In addition, students must have and maintain a minimum cumulative and term grade point average of 3.5 and maintain full-time student status for every term, and for the duration of their award. Universities or other organizations may not apply on behalf of an individual. Prospective scholars do not need to be enrolled in a graduate program at the time of application, but must be admitted to a graduate level program in order to be awarded this scholarship. Eligibility must be maintained for each succeeding year of support and annual reporting requirements, to be specified at a later date, will apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There are no matching requirements for this award.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

There are no other criteria that affect eligibility.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Detailed information on the application package, instructions, submission procedures, and an application checklist can be located on the Nancy Foster Scholarship Program website: <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>. Information to be included in the application submission is shown below and outlined in detail on the Nancy Foster Scholarship website. Further information about the scholarship and NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries research priorities can be found at the web sites: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment>, <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>, respectively. Information in hard copy may be requested from: Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Attention Seaberry Nachbar, 99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455 Monterey, CA 93940. Information contact(s): Send requests for information to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries at the address shown above, by telephone (831) 647-4204, or via e-mail to fosterscholars@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Each application package must include the items listed below unless otherwise indicated. Failure to submit any items as described in this section will disqualify the application from consideration.

1. Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance is located on the Grants.gov portal and must be completed with information pertinent to the applicant. Detailed instructions on how to complete the SF-424 form can be found on the Nancy Foster Scholarship Program website: <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>. Item number 21 on the SF-424 cannot be used as a replacement for the declaration statement required in Item 9 below.

2. General Information Sheet- Provide the information outlined below, but do not exceed 2 typewritten single-spaced pages, font size 12 in Times New Roman. General Information Sheets that are longer than 2 pages in length will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified.

a. Personal Data: Provide your full name (including all aliases and maiden/married names), country of citizenship, current address, permanent address, and home, work, fax, and cellular telephone numbers, and email address.

b. Optional Personal Data: For statistical collection purposes only you may indicate your gender, and race or ethnicity (this information is voluntary).

c. Degree Sought: State your proposed field of study (oceanography, marine biology or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas) and the degree being sought (e.g. M.S., M.A., Ph.D.). Include the

month and year the degree will be awarded. State the name and location of your institution and your academic department for your graduate study.

d. Education: List the academic degrees received, or expect to receive by the start of your proposed graduate studies for this program, including the date of receipt and institution and your current GPA. Provide your graduate advisor's name, address, telephone, fax number, and e-mail address.

e. Academic Honors. List any academic honors received.

f. Relevant Work Experience: List work experience related to your field of study. You may include research and teaching assistantships and any other paid or unpaid work.

Failure to include the General Information Sheet, as outlined above, will result in the application being disqualified.

3. Statement of Intent - Provide the following components outlined below in two separate sections. This statement should not be a research proposal or scientific abstract. This statement will be used to evaluate you as an individual, not necessarily as a scientist, your motivation for applying for this scholarship, and your reflection on how to communicate and educate the public about your research. This statement should demonstrate your organizational and written communication skills. The statement of intent should be typewritten, single-spaced, font size 12 Times New Roman, and should not exceed one page in length. Both sections (a) and (b) will be weighted equally, therefore your descriptions must provide enough detail to review accordingly. Statements longer than one page will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified.

a. A self-description of your academic, research, career goals, and how your proposed course of study or research will help you achieve these goals. This is your opportunity to present yourself, your aspirations, and your career goals. Include any background information that is pertinent, and provide insight into why you choose to pursue these goals.

b. A description on how you envision sharing your research and your results to the broader community and how the benefits of your research will impact society. As a Nancy Foster Scholar, you are asked to become "Sanctuary Ambassadors" which emphasizes the opportunity to conduct education and outreach to the public (i.e. your college or university, community groups/organizations, or schools) about current research issues in our sanctuary system. In this section please outline your ideas on a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding your research as it relates to the sanctuary system and the ocean.

Failure to submit a Statement of Intent as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified.

4. Research Proposal

The Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is designed to support students interested in NOAA mission related sciences of oceanography, marine biology or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas).

Nancy Foster Scholars fulfill the data sharing information plan requirement of section VI.C. by including the completed, signed declaration required in section IV.B.9. of this FFO.

In your proposal, please include the following information:

Discuss the research area you plan to pursue in graduate school and its relationship to sciences in the aforementioned research priorities, and how your research activities support NOAA's mission, particularly the mission of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Information about NOAA is available at www.noaa.gov and in particular, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>, and the ONMS Science Needs Assessment at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment>.

Please make sure that your research goals and path are clearly defined and can be completed within the period of the scholarship and that the proposal is constructed well and you clearly demonstrate your technical knowledge of the research area. The research proposal should be typewritten, single-spaced, font size 12 Times New Roman, and should not exceed 3 pages in length. Page limits are inclusive of figures, and other visual materials, but are exclusive of references. Statements longer than three pages will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified. Failure to submit a research proposal as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified.

5. Statement of Financial Need

To evaluate financial need, NOAA will use the Department of Education's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) determination. To receive an EFC determination, applicants must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the Department of Education. See <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. In response to the FAFSA, the Department of Education will provide the applicant with a Student Aid Report (SAR), which will contain the EFC determination. The previous year's SAR is acceptable for this requirement. A copy of the first page of the SAR which includes the EFC and a 1 page, single spaced essay describing your financial need must be submitted with the application. In your essay describing your financial need, discuss how you plan to fund your graduate level education and what the impact will be if you do not receive this scholarship. Also, list the following in the order stated:

Estimated amount needed for tuition and fees

All resources currently available to you to cover your graduate studies (e.g., grants, student loans, scholarships, research or teaching assistant positions, personal funds)

The length of time these resources will be available and if they include work requirements

Other resources for which you have applied and have received, as well as those for which you have not received a response.

Statements longer than one page, font size 12 Times New Roman, will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified. Failure to submit a Statement of Financial Need will result in the application being disqualified.

6. Institute Certification or Enrollment Verification

For current graduate students, a letter directly e-mailed or mailed from the applicant's institution certifying that the student is enrolled in a graduate program must be submitted. The letter should consist of the following information on school letterhead and be signed by a school official: Name and location of the academic institution, the school and department that you are currently attending. If you have a graduate advisor, list his/her name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and an e-mail address, if available on the Institute Certification. It is preferable that the Institute Certification described above be used. However, some institutions will only provide a standardized institute certification, in which cases that will be acceptable.

The Institute Certification may either be mailed directly from your college or university to:

Nancy Foster Scholarship Program

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

East West Highway SSMC4, Room 11146

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Or an official e-mail from your college or university to the program e-mail address: fosterscholars@noaa.gov. The email itself may be used to fulfill the signature requirement.

Applicants who are applying to graduate school should submit a "List of Graduate Schools applied to" including the month and year graduate studies will begin, and any acceptance letters received at the time of application, with their application in Grants.gov in-lieu of the Institute Certification. Individuals selected to receive the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship award must provide proof of acceptance into a graduate program at a U.S. accredited institution at the time of notification or the individual will be ineligible to receive the award.

The Institute Certification or "List of Graduate Schools applied to" must be received by the due date as outlined in the Executive Summary of this Federal Funding Opportunity at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time. Current transcripts or letters of acceptance from the institution will not be accepted in lieu of the Institute Certification or "List of Graduate Schools applied to" respectively.

Failure to include the Institute Certification or "List of Graduate Schools applied to" as applicable, specifically as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified. Applicants selected to receive the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship will be required to submit a certification of enrollment at the start of each academic term.

7. Transcripts

Official transcripts are required for each applicant. Applicants must submit official transcripts for all complete years of academic training (both undergraduate and graduate), excluding training in progress. Official transcripts must be received by the due date as outlined in the Executive Summary of this Federal Funding Opportunity, at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time.

Official transcripts must be emailed from the college or university to fosterscholars@noaa.gov or mailed to: Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 1305 East West Highway SSMC4 11th Floor, Room 11146 Silver Spring, MD 20910 or sent as an official

Photocopied transcripts are not acceptable. Failure to solicit the submission of the transcripts as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified.

8. Two Letters of Recommendation

Each application must include only two letters of recommendation with written signatures on the actual letter (additional letters will not be considered) from individuals who have knowledge of your academic record, research effort, work and/or life experience. One of these letters must be from someone in your current academic career. If you are currently not enrolled, one letter should be from a professor who can provide knowledge of your academic career. Relevant paid work, such as internships and volunteer efforts, are applicable. Letters of recommendation should include:

Statements of the applicant's ability to succeed in the program proposal;

Familiarity with the applicants work;

Statement that the individual writing the letter has a clear understanding of the goals and aspirations of the applicant on a personal and professional level; and

Clear support for the applicant.

Letters may be mailed or electronically emailed. Mailed letters must be sent to:

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

1305 East West Highway SSMC4 11th Floor, Room 11146

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Electronically emailed letters must sent to: fosterscholars@noaa.gov. All emailed letters of recommendation must be scanned PDFs with a handwritten signature of the person recommending the candidate included in the PDF document.

All letters must be received by the due date given in the Executive Summary and subsection IV.C. "Submission Dates and Times" (below) of this Federal Funding Opportunity, by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time. Applications without two, signed letters of recommendation will result in the application being disqualified.

9. Declaration

Applicants must certify that all statements and information in their application are true and correct by copying the following statement on a separate sheet of paper, providing a handwritten signature on the same paper, and including it in their Grants Online application:

I, the undersigned, declare, under penalty of perjury, that:

I understand and agree to the limitations of the allowable costs for the scholarship funds as defined in this FFO and that I am aware of the data sharing stipulation policy applicable to all NOAA Federal Funding Opportunities. This statement serves as my "Data/Information Sharing Plan" insofar as it expressly states that no funds associated with this award will be used for the collection or creation of any environmental information or data.

All statements and information in my application are true and correct at the time of this application.

Executed on [insert date]: _____

Print or type Name: _____

Signature: _____

Failure to include the exact statement above, signed by the applicant, will result in the application being disqualified.

Assistance on the application and submission process can be found under the "How to Apply" section at the website: <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>.

Each application package must include the items listed in the Application and Submission Information section. Failure to submit all items as described in the Application and Submission Information section or if any item is omitted will disqualify the application from consideration.

Answers to frequently asked questions on the application process are available at: fosterscholars.noaa.gov.

Questions from the NOAA NEPA questionnaire are not required to be answered since the program has been determined to be exempt from NEPA review.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Completed applications must be received by Grants.gov or the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries by December 6, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Applications received after the due date will not be reviewed or considered, and will be disqualified. Date and time of receipt of each application sent via Grants.gov is electronically recorded. Applicants may submit applications via Grants.gov or in paper hard copies. For hard copy submission, each envelope is time and date stamped when received. In order for an application to be considered "Complete" all items required in subsection IV.B. "Content and Form of Application" must be submitted by the submission date.

PLEASE NOTE: For detailed information about registering as an individual and applying in the Grants.gov system, please review the following document: <http://www.grants.gov/assets/IndvUserGuide.pdf>. All applicants, both those using electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant submission timelines for delivery of the application. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Applicants submitting via paper should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in submission dates and times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

If an applicant does not have internet access to complete the application through Grants.gov, hard copy applications may be submitted in one envelope to:

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway SSMC4 11th Floor, Room 11146 Silver Spring, MD 20910.

For paper submissions failure to submit all application items, except transcripts, Institute Certification or "List of Graduate Schools applied to", and letters of recommendation in one envelope will result in disqualification of the application.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Statement of Intent and Academic Record (25%)
 - a. Statement of Intent - 15%
 - b. Grade Point Average - 5%
 - c. Coursework - 5%
2. Research Proposal (35%)
 - a. Alignment with NOAA and ONMS Priorities - 10%
 - b. Feasibility - 10%
 - c. Technical Understanding and Clarity of Proposal - 15%
3. Recommendations (15%)

- a. Familiarity of Applicant - 7%
 - b. Strength of Support - 8%
- 4. Experience and Communication (15%)
 - a. Experience - 7%
 - b. Communication Skills - 8%
- 5. Financial Need (10%)
 - a. Estimated Financial Need - 5%
 - b. Statement of Financial Need - 5%

B. Review and Selection Process

Once NOAA receives an application, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with the minimum requirements, including completeness of the application.

All applications that pass the administrative review will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by an independent review panel. The panel will be comprised of three or more individuals, having expertise in NOAA-related science and knowledge of the program priorities of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. The panel will rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and weighting provided above. The individual panelist scores will be averaged for each application and placed in a ranking order of all applications. No consensus advice will be provided by the independent review panel. The ranking order will be presented to the Program Officer who will neither vote nor score proposals as part of the independent review panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the application. The Program Officer will transmit the review information to the Selection Official and may make a recommendation to the Selection Official about applying the selection factors below. The Selection Official, will award in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendation. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless the

proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Balance/Distribution of Funds
 - a. Across academic disciplines
 - b. By types of institution
 - c. Geographic area
2. Availability of funds
3. ONMS-specific priorities
4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications and subsequent notification to applicants will be completed by May 30, 2013. Funds are expected to be awarded by July 1, 2013, which is the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive electronic notification that the application has been funded from the NOAA Grants Management Division. Electronic notification will be issued to each successful applicant with instructions on how to access the Grants Online system and view the terms of the award. The annual reporting requirements are also included in the award package.

The names, academic institutions, degrees being sought, research plans, photographs and biographical information of the scholarship award recipients will be posted on the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program website: <http://www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov> after selections have been confirmed and accepted. The information posted on the web site may also be published in marketing materials developed to advertise the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program and further the mission of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not recommended for funding (declined) within five months of the application due date.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696) are applicable to this solicitation via: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$25,000. To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpi=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl and http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpi=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

Limitation of Liability- In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

It has been determined that the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships are categorically excluded from the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

C. Reporting

Scholarship recipients are required to provide annual reports documenting the scholar's activities, accomplishments, academic progress, research progress, and education and outreach progress. The report must include copies of receipts indicating disbursement of the education allowance and copies of receipts for allowable expenses under the program collaboration. The report must include a certification from the scholar's academic advisor indicating that the student's work is on track and a copy of the official transcript indicating the scholar has full-time student status and a minimum term and cumulative GPA of 3.5. These reports must be submitted through the Grants On Line system.

At the conclusion of the program collaboration, recipients are required to submit a trip report documenting their accomplishments and including a summary testimonial of their experience.

At the conclusion of the award, recipients are required to submit a final report encompassing their accomplishments during the award period and their post scholarship plans, especially regarding NOAA interactions and the "Sanctuary Ambassador" requirement. The final report should include a copy of the final transcript indicating degree earned, if applicable. All scholars are required to submit a copy of their Master's thesis or PhD Dissertation upon completion of their degree.

D. Data Sharing Plan

Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as an appendix. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

Information on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Policy is available under:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.pdf

VII. Agency Contacts

Send requests for information to fosterscholars@noaa.gov or mail requests to:

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries,
Attention Seaberry Nachbar 99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455, Monterey, CA 93940. Or contact
Seaberry Nachbar via phone at (831) 647-4204 or Kate Thompson at (301) 713-7245.

VIII. Other Information

A. The Stipend and Education Allowance

The annual stipend (which consists of the full scholarship award) will be paid directly to the scholar. Tuition (including fall, winter, spring and summer) and academic fees may be negotiated between the academic institution and the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship program officer at NOAA prior to the receipt of funds. This negotiation is intended to leverage scholarship funds and enhance opportunities for scholarship recipients. In those instances in which tuition and academic fees are not totally waived by the academic institution, the education allowance in an amount equal to the tuition and fee not waived (but not to exceed \$12,000) will be paid directly to the scholar for remittance to the academic institution. If tuition and fees are reduced or waived by the academic institution, then that portion of the education allowance not needed (i.e., up to \$12,000 in the case of a total waiver) will be retained by NOAA for future scholarships. No money will be paid directly to the student from the education allowance for purposes other than the payment of tuition, fees, and education costs including but not limited to books required for courses. Health insurance is

an allowable education cost if it is directly billed on the tuition statement. You may work and receive loans if you receive this scholarship.

B. General Scholarship Information

Specific instructions regarding the disbursement, management, and reporting requirements for all stipend and tuition allowance payments will be provided to the scholarship recipients upon selection for the award. The awarding of funds beyond the first year will be based on availability of funds, continued eligibility of the student, semi-annual certification by the academic institution that adequate academic progress is being made, and in compliance with applicable reporting requirements. At its discretion, each academic institution may supplement a scholar's stipend from institutional funds in accordance with the supplementation policy of the institution.